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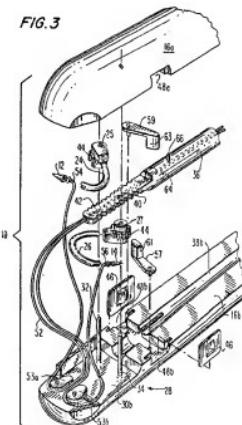
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(54) Instrument for closing trocar puncture wounds.

(55) A surgical instrument 10 for applying sutures through body tissue including a handle assembly, an elongated housing 16 removably mounted to said handle assembly and having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion, at least one needle carrier 24, 26 operatively mounted in the distal end portion and movable between a retracted position and a deployed position, and a needle 12, 14 releasably retained in the needle carrier member. The instrument may also include a retaining mechanism 68, 70, 72, adapted to retain the at least one needle carrier in the partially deployed position.





European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 94 11 5152

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
P, X	WO-A-94 05213 (LAURUS MEDICAL CORPORATION) * figures 1A-1H * ----	1,3-5	A61B17/04
X	DE-C-41 37 218 (H. HEIDMULLER) * column 4, line 13 - line 39; figures 1-4 * -----	1,3,4	
TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)			
A61B			
Non-patent literature considered by the Examiner			
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner	
THE HAGUE	16 December 1994	GERARD, B	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone	T : theory or principle underlying the invention		
Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category	E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date		
A : technological background	D : document cited in the application		
O : non-written disclosure	L : document cited for other reasons		
P : intermediate document	4 : number of the same patent family, corresponding document		



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CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- All claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- Only part of the claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claims:
- No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet -B-

- All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respects of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- None of the further search fees has been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:



LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims 1-8 : Surgical instrument for applying internal sutures with "latch retaining mechanism" and "3 operative positions".
2. Claims 9-12 : Indicator providing indication of a position in a suturing instrument as known from DE-C-4 137 218.
3. Claims 13-23 : Surgical instrument for applying sutures held on an elongate housing adapted to be removably "loaded" on a handle, "reloadable instrument"